













<u>Plan</u>	<u>Construct</u>	<u>Manage</u>		<u>Plan</u>	<u>Construct</u>	<u>Manage</u>	
			Regulators or Public Sector				
			Suppliers or Private (commercial) Sector				
			Users or Popular Sector				
<u>Locally self-governing or autonomous housing systems</u>				<u>Centrally administered or heteronomous housing systems</u>			

Who decides?

This is Part 8 of a course on Philosophy and Religion. In this part, so far, we have looked at three chapters of Paulo Freire's "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed", with Chapter 1 of that book being taken as the default discussion text for study-circle purposes.

Although "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed" is on the face of it a book about education, yet what we have found is that the author has felt himself compelled to reach down to the very foundations of philosophy so as to find a firm ground upon which to rest his educational theories.

In the process, Freire enriches the literature of philosophy, as well as that of education, by re-stating the dialectics of the

Subject and the Object, using it to illuminate education, and as a return gift to philosophy, providing an object lesson in the meaning of philosophy and making a good illustration of what philosophy is for.

Similarly, in the world of urbanism and housing, philosophy is an absolutely practical necessity, and although the fields are different, yet the philosophy applied remains much the same.

John Turner, author of “Housing by People” (see the linked chapters below), was preoccupied with the same foundational problem (subjectivity; agency; freedom) as Freire. Turner problematised it as a relationship of “paternalism and filialism” (father-ism and child-ism), which is immediately recognisable as the very opposite of the “co-intent Subjects” proposed as a solution by Freire.

Turner writes:

“Paternalism and filialism, the modern descendents of attitudes more generally associated by Europeans with the Middle Ages, are still very common attitudes in Britain. These are especially evident in the common assumption that the 'ordinary' citizen or 'layman', is utterly dependent on the 'extraordinary' citizen or the 'professional', who cultivates the mystery of his or her activity in order to increase dependency and professional fees.”

Paternalism means fatherliness while Filialism means taking the posture of the child. Turner means that professionals, as well as

the State, take a parental role, while the people are infantilised.

Turner's diagram

The diagram above is from Turner's "Housing by People". It shows "who decides" in two different kinds of housing project: the locally self-governing or **autonomous** one on the left; and the centrally-administered-from-above or **heteronomous** type, on the right.

Turner says that it is not necessary for people to be so extremely autonomous that they must do everything for themselves, like land-owning peasants. Such a life is very hard, cruel, backward, limited and unsocialised. Yet, if all decisions are taken out of the hands of individuals, they cease, to that extent, to have "agency"; they cease to be Subjects; they cease to be free; they cease to be human.

In South Africa, with its "RDP Houses", it is easy to see that nearly all the decisions that affect the people in the area of "Housing" are taken far above their heads. The right-hand part of the above diagram applies, in full. The possibilities for leaving decisive power in the hands of the popular masses, like in the left-hand part of the diagram, have been closed.

Such decisions include the location, demarcation and distribution of houses, their design and quality of building, and the provision of amenities and services. The people who must then live in these houses do so without any of their autonomous culture, except to the extent that it is contained in their living persons.

Karl Marx, in the Manifesto, wrote that “the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” By application of that philosophy to the field of housing, we can see that what South Africa has executed in this field is in general something far less than freedom. Even such freedom as could have been available, has mostly been over-run by “heteronomy” (decision by others).

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Housing by People, C1 and 6, Who decides?, 1976, Turner.](#)
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